

Challenges

a newsletter of the UCGIS

University Consortium for
Geographic Information Science
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From the Desk of the President



Since our October 2004 Assembly in Baltimore, UCGIS has been moving forward on a number of fronts. Jack Sanders, who joined UCGIS in August of 2004 and helped organize and make the Assembly successful, has settled in as our Executive Director. He has taken over the necessary operations to maintain UCGIS, but more fundamentally, he is moving to help establish new contacts and define our role better with respect to interaction with Federal agencies and Congress. His success in these efforts depends on our delegates communicating with him and providing him necessary information concerning our goals and capabilities.

Although the time has been short, we have moved forward with an award of the 2005 and 2006 SPACE Workshop grants to San Francisco State University and the University of Oklahoma, respectively. The USGS Post Doc position was not awarded, but negotiation with USGS has led to a solution that will provide more funds for the award and an award will be made in 2005. We are now Co-Sponsors of two upcoming conferences, the Auto-Carto 2005 Research Symposium in Las Vegas, Nevada, March 21-23, 2005 and Integration of Remote Sensing and GIS for Detection and Prediction of Contamination and Degradation of Water and Agricultural Resources in Kiev, Ukraine in June 2005.

In planning our meetings and assemblies, we held a successful competition among UCGIS member institutions for an opportunity to present research results related to GIScience and health issues at the Winter 2005 Congressional Breakfast. Six proposals were selected in an effort coordinated by Dr. Sean Ahearn of Hunter College. We have also secured the facilities for our Summer Assembly in Jackson, Wyoming for June 28-July 2, 2005. Planning of the event is underway with Mary Lou Larson coordinating local activities.

While the time since our Assembly was two months shorter than usual because of the October timeframe to join GIScience 2004, events continue to require the attention of the Board and Council. We will be electing three new Board members and a president-elect in the Winter Meeting and hope that all delegates will join us.

E. Lynn Usery

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Upcoming Events

2005 Summer Assembly

"The UCGIS will hold its **Annual Assembly** on 29 June - 1 July, 2005 at the **Snow King Resort**, Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

UCGIS Virtual Seminar 2005

Inspired by the Geographic Information Systems Certification Institute's publication in 2004 of a Code of Ethics (http://www.gisci.org/code_of_ethics.htm), the topic of this year's Virtual Seminar will be "Ethics for Geographic Information Systems and Science Professionals." The Seminar will span ten weeks in the Fall of 2005, from 12 October through 21 December.



The goal of the 2005 Virtual Seminar will be to foster students' ability to recognize and respond appropriately to ethical problems encountered in professional practice, and to understand the bases of ethical practice in philosophy and law. Francis Harvey and Will Craig have already agreed to participate as seminar leaders; other potential leaders are invited to apply. Qualified scholars who lead at least three weekly sessions will earn a \$1000 honorarium (paid by Penn State).

The Penn State Master of Geographic Information Systems program, which is conducted online via the University's World Campus, will offer the UCGIS Virtual Seminar to its registered students for 3 graduate credits as GEOG 597. Students at other UCGIS member institutions will be able to participate in the Seminar as guests. Faculty members at other institutions may elect to offer a parallel course number so that their students may earn credit for their participation.

The instructional design and development team that supports the Penn State Master of GIS program will coordinate faculty activities, host the primary e-learning infrastructure, and provide technical support. Students and faculty members will be able to access a syllabus, course calendar, assignments, and communication tools through Penn State's Web-based course management system. Other media, including desktop Web conferencing and streaming video, may also be employed as appropriate.

Please contact me if you are interested in participating as a seminar leader or if you wish to make the seminar available to your students.

David DiBiase, Chair, Education Committee.

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"Three Spatial Perspectives on Analysis for Curriculum

Enhancement" (SPACE) Workshops will be held this summer for instructors.

Application deadline April 15, 2005.

Visit the SPACE webpage at <http://www.csiss.org/SPACE/workshops/> for admission and scholarship information.

Member institutions, please feel free to download and distribute the [flier](#) to social science faculty at your institution.

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Call for Nominations for the 2005 UCGIS Education Award

The UCGIS Education Committee is pleased to call for nominations for the 2005 UCGIS Educator of the Year Award for an individual who has made outstanding contributions to GIScience education.

Contributions of national significance may include:

- Sustained effectiveness in teaching in formal GIScience courses;
- Enhanced public awareness of GIScience through informal science education;
- Supervision of outstanding graduate students entering careers in GIScience education and research and GIScience related professions;
- Authorship or editorship of significant GIScience textbooks;
- Authorship of significant journal articles, book chapters, or monographs concerned with GIScience education;
- Leadership in GIScience curriculum development and program design; and
- Leadership in the development of GIScience education policy in academic and professional organizations.

Nominations should include the following information:

- Nominee's name;
- Nominee's affiliation(s);
- Nominee's contact information;
- Evidence of the nominee's contributions to GIScience education (including references and/or offprints of significant publications);
- Explanation of the significance of the nominee's contributions;
- Nominator's name;
- Nominator's affiliation; and
- Nominator's contact information;

Nominations shall be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Education Committee empanelled and chaired by the 2004 awardee, **Dr. Karen Kemp**. The Education Award Committee may identify additional nominees or choose recommend that no award be given in a particular year. The name of the person selected for the award, if applicable, shall be forwarded to the UCGIS Board for final approval. All GIScience educators worldwide are eligible for the award, except for the current members of the Education Award Committee. However, only people affiliated with UCGIS member institutions may make official nominations or serve on the Award Committee.

Nominations should be forwarded to David DiBiase, Chairperson, UCGIS Education Committee, by **April 15, 2005**, by electronic mail (dibiase@psu.edu) or regular

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mail (David DiBiase, Director, Dutton e-Education Institute, 2217 Earth-Engineering Sciences Building, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park PA 16802). The award will be presented at the 2005 UCGIS Summer Assembly at Jackson, Wyoming, **June 29-July 1, 2005**.

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Call for Nominations for the 2005 UCGIS Research Award

The UCGIS Research Award is given to the creators of a particularly outstanding research contribution to Geographic Information Science in 2004. Normally, the Research Award is awarded to author(s) of an outstanding research work or series of works published in a peer-reviewed medium. The committee will also consider other modes of expression of research results, including patents, software packages, and non-refereed publications. All researchers worldwide are eligible for the award, except for the current members of the Research Award Committee. However, only people affiliated with University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS) member institutions may make official nominations or serve on the Research Award Committee.

The nomination package must include a copy of the publication or product upon which the nomination is based, together with a letter explaining why the contribution should be given the UCGIS Research Award. The main criterion for choosing the awardee(s) is impact of the research achievement on the theory and/or practice of GIScience, or on research using GIS, or on Geographic Information Technology, as documented in the letter of nomination and judged by the Research Award Committee. After due consideration of all nominations, the Research Award Committee will recommend an award winner for confirmation by the UCGS Board of Directors.

The Board will appoint a Research Award Committee consisting of a Chair and four other members once the deadline for nominations has passed. The Research Award Committee may also nominate additional research achievements for the award or choose to recommend that no award be given in a particular year. All members of the committee will be employed by or affiliated with institutions that are members of UCGIS. The committee members must also be drawn from five different UCGIS member institutions, and should reflect the full range of disciplines in Geographic Information Science.

The nominations for the 2004 UCGIS Research Award should be forwarded to Professor Timothy L. Nyerges, Chair of the UCGIS Research Committee, no later than 5:00 p.m. PST on Friday, 20th May 2005 by electronic mail (nyerges@u.washington.edu), regular mail (Dr. Timothy Nyerges, Department of Geography, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195), or fax (206-543-3313). The award, itself, will be presented at the UCGIS 2005 Summer Assembly Jackson Wyoming, June 2005.

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UCGIS Winter Meeting Report



by Greg Elmes, Communications Committee

UCGIS held its 2005 Winter Meeting in Washington DC on February 10th & 11th. On Wednesday February 9th early arrivals held a planning meeting prior to the Congressional Breakfast events showcasing current GISc research and the UCGIS Board held a working dinner at the Capitol Hill Club. Brisk and windy conditions greeted Thursday morning arrivals at the Hart Senate Office Building for the Congressional Breakfast and UCGIS presentations. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D NY), and Representatives Carolyn B. Maloney (D NY) and Christopher Shays (R CN) sponsored the breakfast. The consortium thanks the honorable members for their support. The presentations, ably coordinated by Sean Ahearn (CUNY - Hunter College), focused on contemporary roles and issues for geographic information science and Public Health, both human and animal. Details of the six presentations are found at <http://www.ucgis.org/winter2005/schedule.htm>.

Once again UCGIS members drew attention to newsworthy and scientifically crucial contributions of our science and technology with outstanding clarity and visual effect. It was especially encouraging to welcome talks from newer members representing the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and the University of Michigan / Biomedware. Staffers from a number of congressional offices attended and several UCGIS members took the opportunity to meet their House and Senate delegations.

The Federal agency briefings were given in the U.S. Capitol Building. Peg Barratt, Division Director, Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences presented multidisciplinary opportunities for GISc funding at NSF. Ron Birk, Director, Earth Science Applications Division, spoke of the current Earth Science Applications Plan at NASA (<http://science.hq.nasa.gov/strategy/AppPlan.pdf>), emphasizing the need for interoperability of spatial data from disparate sources. Greg Smith, Chief Scientist and Scott Loomer, Science Advisor for Geospatial Science represented the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). The Geospatial Management Office, Department of Homeland Security focused on the emergence and establishment of the office today and the potential for interaction in future. Barbara Ryan, Associate Director for Geography, spoke of the effects and opportunities resulting from recent reorganization at U.S. Geological Survey. The President's just-released budget seeks additional funds for some agencies, notably NSF, but on the whole, budgetary restrictions are having a dampening effect on most available sources of funding. The organization of the Geospatial Management Office, Department of Homeland Security provides a promising counterpoint.

On Friday morning Art Getis (SUSD) introduced, and John Weeks (SUSD) chaired, a session devoted to reflections by participants in "Spatial Perspectives on Curriculum

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Enhancement (SPACE)" - a CSISS Funded Project in which UCGIS Cooperates. SPACE stimulates the dissemination of spatial thinking and GISc into social science curricula including geography, but with an outreach into other disciplines and to institutions where geography is less well established. The enthusiasm of the participants was infectious, and the focus on inquiry based learning with field study and real applications clearly was successful in the pilot projects. Faculty members from Arizona State University, the University of Texas at Dallas, George Washington University, and Columbia University addressed the results of classroom projects in geography, criminal justice, urban fieldwork in Africa and public health.

Many attendees also commented very favorably on the offering following the SPACE talks by Mr. Robert Canavan of the Federal Management Strategies firm. Mr. Canavan, an unabashed and successful lobbyist for education spoke of the means by which UCGIS might hold a more effective meeting on Capitol Hill in the sense of dovetailing with the legislative process. Mr. Canvan stressed the importance of the authorization phase and the need for a clearly focused request to legislative committees for specific actions. The importance and hierarchy of congressional staffers was reinforced, along with the need to identify elements of agency agendas to which we can lend UCGIS support.

After lunch, delegates participated in the meetings of the Research, Education, Communication, Sponsored Programs, Research Projects, and Policy and Legislative Committees. Reports from these meetings will be forthcoming. The UCGIS Council meeting began with a vote on new members and Kansas State University, the University of Memphis and North Carolina State were duly elected. Welcome new members! Nina Lam will succeed Lynn Usery as president; John Wilson was elected president-elect and Mei-po Kwan, Scot MacKay and Greg Elmes were elected to the board. The complete minutes of the Council Meeting will be available at http://www.ucgis.org/membersonly/Administration/mo_mtgminutes.htm. Upon reflection much was accomplished and much learned for communication of the value and necessity of GISc research and education at future meetings. Many thanks are due to Mr. Jack Sanders, UCGIS Executive Director for the seamless organization of a multi-venued meeting, and to outgoing board members

Zorica Nedovic-Budic and John Wilson, president, Lynn Usery and past-president, Carolyn Merry.

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by Jane Read, Communications Chair

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Who's New at UCGIS

Elected Officers

- *President:* Nina Lam, Louisiana State University
- *President-elect:* John Wilson, University of Southern California

Elected Board Members

- Gregory Elmes, West Virginia University
- Scott Mackay, State University of New York - Buffalo
- Mei-Po Kwan, Ohio State University

Committee Chairs

- Research Committee: Tim Nyerges, University of Washington
- Research Projects Committee: Tom Cova, University of Utah
- Communications Committee: Jane Read, Syracuse University

For a complete list of UCGIS officers, board members and committee chairs [click here](#).

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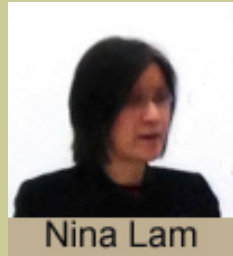
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UCGIS News

Prof. Nina Lam receives major grant to set up a new spatial lab at LSU

GIS at Louisiana State University is thriving, thanks in part, to the dedicated efforts of Dr. Nina Lam, incoming UCGIS president, and R. J. Russell Distinguished Professor of Geography.

Prof. Lam studies environmental change, particularly the complex relationships between the physical environment and human health. Her scientific research has her mapping cancer clusters in China, investigating the spread of AIDS in rural America, and examining urban climate change. Dr. Nina Lam has been nationally and internationally recognized for her scholarship and research in using advanced GIS and remote sensing techniques to solve societal problems. She has served as the Program Director of the Geography and Regional Science Program at the National Science Foundation. In 2004, at the 100th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Dr. Nina Lam received the 2004 AAG Remote Sensing Specialty Group Outstanding Contributions Award for her contributions to the field of remote sensing and to the geographic community through her research, teaching, and outreach.



Nina Lam

In 2004, her research group received a \$100,000 grant, as part of the Louisiana Legislature's commitment to strengthening the states IT infrastructure in order to foster economic development. The new Spatial Laboratory contains 27 computer stations and a multimedia instructional station and is a boon for students committed to learning GIS.

Useful Links

LSU UCGIS Portfolio

<http://www.ucgis.lsu.edu/>

LSU Department of Geography and Anthropology

<http://www.ga.lsu.edu/>

Computer Aided Design and Geographic Information Systems (CADGIS) Research Lab

<http://www.cadgis.lsu.edu/>

LSU Computer Mapping Sciences Lab

<http://www.cms.lsu.edu/>

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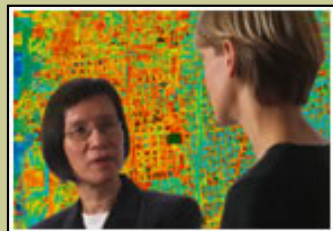
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UCGIS News

A conversation with Nina Lam



We must continue to strive to increase the visibility and the value of GIScience to society at large, says incoming UCGIS President, Dr. Nina Lam.

Professor Nina Lam is no stranger to the GIS community – full professor and R. J. Russell Distinguished Professor of Geography at Louisiana State University, Nina has been active within UCGIS since its inception (Louisiana State University was one of the founding members of UCGIS).

Dr. Nina Lam has also been nationally and internationally recognized for her scholarship and research in using advanced GIS and remote sensing techniques to solve societal problems. She has served as the Program Director of the Geography and Regional Science Program at the National Science Foundation. In 2004, at the 100th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Dr. Nina Lam received the 2004 AAG Remote Sensing Specialty Group Outstanding Contributions Award for her contributions to the field of remote sensing and to the geographic community through her research, teaching, and outreach.

Laxmi Ramasubramanian, faculty member at Hunter College's Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, and a member of the UCGIS Communications Committee, recently interviewed Dr. Lam to learn more about her vision and goals for UCGIS.

Laxmi:

What are the main issues that UCGIS, as an organization, must address in the next few years?

Nina:

First, let me start by saying that UCGIS is doing very well as an organization. In a relatively short time, UCGIS has established itself as a strong advocate for the academic GIS community, especially in creating visibility for GIScience as a critical research area deserving of federal funding. I am grateful to my peers and colleagues who have worked in a variety of ways to strengthen the organization over the years.

However, I am also reminded of an old Chinese proverb that says that it's easy to start a new project, but a lot harder to keep it going. In short, we encounter new challenges, now that UCGIS is a mature and established organization. One of the central issues is that UCGIS must work on is helping raise the value of GIScience research to federal, state, and local policymakers who influence funding allocations

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for research and development activities.

Laxmi:

Isn't raising visibility to policymakers one of the goals of our UCGIS winter meetings?

Nina:

You're right. We have continued to hold these Winter meetings in Washington DC so that we can showcase the best work of our community to policymakers and decision makers their so that they will have data and evidence when it comes time to consider funding allocations for NSF or other science and educational programs. For the 2005 winter meeting, we are emphasizing the interlinkages between GIScience and Public Health and we have an impressive line up of presentations (a list of presentations can be found on our website, <http://www.ucgis.org/winter2005/schedule.htm>).

However, the winter meetings are only one avenue to make visible the good work that we do. We have an interesting situation occurring - although a lot of people use GIS and may even see GIS as an enabling science, they are hard pressed to explain why GIScience should be at the core of science or social science research. We need to be able to identify projects that showcase how GIScience can be an effective core of science/social science research.

I think it's partly our job as UCGIS members to explain what GIScience is to a non-technical audience. We can take our cues from the physical and biological sciences where scholars tend to agree on the central questions that are of significance to the field. We need to work towards building consensus on the overarching research questions that need to be addressed in the coming decade. As we set research priorities, it's important that we don't end up developing a laundry list of issues that need to be addressed, but really come to grips with the most important issues where we can use our skills, knowledge, and expertise to make a meaningful contribution to addressing social problems.

Laxmi:

It seems to me that when we compare ourselves to the physical and biological sciences, we are severely underfunded....what is UCGIS doing to address this issue?

Nina:

With several colleagues both within and outside UCGIS, we are working to convince national funding agencies such as NSF that there is a need to create a focused program in GIScience. Such a program would create a structural change in the funding allocation model and increase the research funding available to our community. However, this is a major challenge. In the short run, the success of our individual member institutions in securing research funding from a variety of sources suggests that our work is being recognized at different levels, from the community level to the international arena. However, having a clear set of research objectives that we pursue as a community of scholars makes us attractive to funding agencies. UCGIS, I believe is the appropriate organization to take on the challenge of crafting a research agenda for the coming decade. I, for one, would like to see us develop stronger intersections with public health, which will open up funding opportunities from NIH, for instance.

Laxmi:

What would you say are the benefits of becoming a UCGIS member institution?

Nina:

My university, Louisiana State University, was one of the founding members of the consortium. At LSU, the membership has helped us formalize and strengthen an on-going collaborative relationship across departments. Over the years, our membership has helped us to establish a strong GIScience presence within the university. Clearly, UCGIS helps foster networks and linkages between individual members at different colleges and universities and strengthens the possibilities for doing truly collaborative research. But, more importantly, UCGIS provides a structure for faculty and students from different departments within a single institution to come together as a cohesive unit. This function is particularly important for those institutions that don't have a large geography or GIS program or for smaller colleges and universities where individual faculty members may not have the opportunities to work across traditional disciplinary boundaries to pursue their interests in GIS.

For students, the UCGIS summer meetings provide a valuable opportunity to meet with senior scholars in a relatively relaxed setting, and to connect with their peers. They are also able to showcase their work. Regardless of their disciplinary identity, they are able to create and sustain their identity as a GIScientist or GIScholar.

From my LSU experience, I would say that the intangible benefits of being a UCGIS member institution are many. We've created an integrated GIScience curriculum that serves both undergraduate and graduate students. The growing cadre of students graduating with knowledge and skills in GIS become our ambassadors within and outside the state. Our listserve, the LSUGIS list links current and former students and becomes a resource for students looking for jobs and other opportunities. Likewise, the list is our connection to state and local GIS activities. UCGIS membership helps us strategically manage our facilities and brings us together to develop university-wide software licensing agreements. GIS@LSU is a success story, exemplified by the fact that my research group has recently been awarded funds to create and maintain a new Spatial Laboratory, which is part of the Louisiana's investment in IT infrastructure.

Laxmi:

Any concluding comments...

Nina:

What UCGIS has done over the past few years has been great; I am looking forward to continuing the good work and working towards the goal of creating a sustainable funding base of GIScience research. I invite members to send in updates about activities at their institutions to us so that we can showcase it on our UCGIS website, <http://www.ucgis.org>.

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